

REMARKS

The Examiner has objected to the disclosure because of the following informalities: The reference to parent U.S. Patent Application Serial Number 09/624,308 in the Specification has been amended to reflect that the parent application has been issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,612,447.

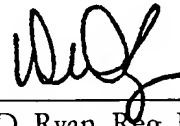
The Examiner had rejected Claims 3-4 because the claimed recitation of a use, without setting forth any steps involved in the process, results in an improper definition of a process. Newly introduced claims 5 and 6 positively recite method steps, incorporating the elements of now cancelled claims 1 and 2, with blood processing steps. It is believed this rejection has been overcome.

Originally filed claims 1 -4 stood rejected under 35 U.S.C. '103 based upon EP 406485 (EP 485). Claims 1-4 have been cancelled. The new claims incorporate the structure of a filter that is defined in the apparatus case of the parent case, now US 6,612,447. EP 485 was a principal reference considered during the prosecution of the parent case. In view of the allowance of the claims in the parent case in light of the EP 485, it is believed that method claims incorporating the subject matter of the issued parent case claims are likewise allowable. EP 485 does not teach or suggest use of a filter, as defined in new claims 5 and 6, that include a layered non-fibrous membrane structure in combination with fibrous prefilter and postfilter regions, or that uses a layered non fibrous membrane structure that is purposely arranged so that the first skin surface of one non fibrous membrane layer (having smaller pores) adjoins the second skin surface of an adjacent non fibrous membrane layer (having larger pores).

Allowance of newly presented claims 5 and 6 is respectfully requested

Respectfully Submitted,

By



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